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ADDRESS

of

Major Jno. F. Lacey

APRIL 7th, 1912

at

Shiloh Battle Ground
TENNESSEE

On Fiftieth Anniversary
of Battle

Why Do We Create Battle
Field Parks and Erect
Monuments Thereon?

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The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of any event by survivors is something which must always be tinged with more or less sadness and disappointment. It is a short time in the history of a nation, but a long time in the life of a man.

The average of a generation is thirty-three years. No wonder that so few survivors appear here today. But there are still many left of the great host who battled here in 1862, and they are with one accord turning their thoughts in this direction today. Their hearts are with us.

The first day at Shiloh ended in gloom, and night closed in on the silent dead and amid the moans of the wounded.

The Iowa monument now stands renewed for its second day at Shiloh. It has not yielded to defeat. It has risen again from its overthrow. May it stand as a mute eloquent memorial of the heroism of the sons of Iowa for thousands of years to come.

Battles are turning points in the world's history, and to the scene of one of these sanguinary struggles the human imagination always turns with profound interest.

In all days and generations a pyramid or a mound has been the most common memorial of a battlefield,

and under such mounds are usually interred the remains of the dead.

The great mound at Waterloo, surmounted by the colossal Belgian lion marks the spot where the Old Guard went down in final defeat, after Napoleon had dominated the world for twenty years. And when I visited this monument a few years ago the straws hung from the open jaws of the lion, showing that the doves of peace had there built their nest.

At Cheronea the Greek mound marks the spot where their heroes were buried twenty-three hundred years ago, and in the broken fragments of the old lion on that mound the wild bees have made their home.

When the warring hosts cease their contests peace resumes its sway, and the birds are in possession of the field at Shiloh.

Germany has erected a monument to the great Arminius, who overthrew a splendid Roman army in the days of Augustus, and whose name troubled the sleep of the Emperor and led him to cry aloud in the anguish of his heart: "O, Valens, give me back my legions!"

Zinghis Klan erected a pyramid of skulls to commemorate his victories—the most ghastly memorial of the scourage of mankind. These monu-

ments have usually celebrated the victories of aggression but it has remained to the people of our country to make a memorial or monument of the battlefield itself.

These national parks are created rather to commemorate the full and complete reconciliation that has come upon the participants in our Civil War. As the war of York and Lancaster ended in the union of the Red and White Roses, so the reunion of the states is cemented upon every battlefield of the war.

We have met on one of the greatest of these battlefields, upon the fiftieth anniversary of the contest. Today we stand among the trees, where the whistling bullet, the shrieking shot and shell dealt such havoc; and best of all we meet on this scene as friends rejoicing in a Union cemented by so much of sorrow and strife.

From Bull Run to Appomattox as the crow flies is only one hundred and twenty miles, but that journey covered thousands of miles through many states. Measured by time it was a journey of four years: measured in blood and tears it was a thousand years.

The journey was by various and devious routes: through mud and

mire, through sunshine and through storm, through summer heats and winter snows, through dangers by flood and fire, through dangers by stream and wood, through sickness and sorrow, and by the wayside death always stalked and grimly claimed his own.

The real monument of that war after all is not the marble and granite that celebrates the life and death of heroes, or preserves their features or names for the study of generations yet to come.

Under St. Paul's Cathedral in London is the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren, who designed the beautiful building and constructed it from corner stone to spire. His epitaph is short and simple: "If you would see my monument, look around you!"

If you would see the true monument of these dead, and of their surviving comrades, look around you wherever you may be. A united country is their monument. Their manument can be seen from the car windows of forty-eight prosperous states.

The monuments erected by the living to the dead honor the living even more than they honor the dead. And here upon this southern battlefield, surrounded by men who fought on both sides, we may quote with aur

approval the immortal and prophetic words of Shakespeare:

“Our peace will like a broken limb
united

Grow stronger for the breaking.”

And so it is the wounded shell fish that produces the pearl.

The high water mark of the Confederacy was reached at Gettysburg, and that turning point was dedicated by the immortal address of Abraham Lincoln. His declaration that, “The world will little regard what we say here, but will always remember what they did here,” is as true also of Shiloh.

Shiloh was dedicated fifty years ago by the men who fought and died and by the men who fought and lived.

But in the wildest dreams of the participants in that bloody battle no one thought that any of the generation engaged in that contest would live to see the men on both sides setting it apart as a memorial to heroism, and dedicated to the perpetuity of the Union of the states.

Vicksburg's grim walls stood as a barrier to the commerce of the Father of Waters, and there, too, was another one of the turning points in our history. There the Titanic battle raged for months, and little did the combatants think that they were pre-

paring the field for a beautiful park dedicated to Peace and Union.

Both armies worshiped the same God. Lincoln and Stonewall Jackson offered up prayers for victory and a just God answered the prayers as was best for them all.

The night before Blenheim Marlborough took the Holy Sacrament nad prepared to conquer or die. When the Swiss troops at Granson knelt to pray before going into battle the courtiers of Charles the Bold said, "Sire, they are kneeling in submission," but Charles knew they were praying to the Almighty and preparing for death or victory, and that their reverent attitude showed them to be most dangerous to their enemies. They feared God, only.

A hundred years ago bloodletting was the cure for all diseases. This sanguinary remedy has gone into disuse, and I trust the time will come when such heroic treatment as war produces will no longer need to be used throughout the world. The arbitrament of justice will take the place of the sword.

Let us hope that Famine, Fire and Sword will cease to crouch like hounds at the heels of Mars waiting for employment.

Comrades, youth, like the aloe,

blooms but once. The men who join in this semi-centennial reunion must of necessity be growing old, though they were but boys in 1862. But they are not out of date; they see things denied to the sight of the younger generation.

“The soul’s dark cottage, battered and decayed,
“Lets in the light through chinks that time hath made.”

We are all united here today, we have no quarrel, unless it be like that of the newly married couple, who disputed vigorously over the question as to which loved the other best. Let the dispute ever proceed as to whether the North or the South is the most devoted to the flag of the Union.

Hate is love turned wrong side out. The hate of 1862 has turned again to love. A kind hand clenched makes an ugly fist—but when it opens again it is ready for a welcoming grasp.

The North and the South are united as they never were before since the closing days of the Revolution. When King James II at La Hogue was watching his French allies in their battle for his restoration, and the French were driven back, the fugitive king cried exultantly, “See how my brave English fight.”

After Bull Run Charles Francis Adams attended a levee of the Queen at London and some of the English present said tauntingly: "Mr. Minister, these Confederates fight well."

Mr. Adams proudly replied: "Of course they do, they are my countrymen."

And let me say for the soldiers North and South, that I can recall no instance since the war when one of these men ever led a mob.

Montesquieu has said: "Happy is that nation whose annals are tiresome."

More stirring history was crowded into the brief four years of the Civil war than in any five times that length of peaceful years: There are vacant spots in the sky. And in no period of the world's history have there been more fruitful years with their harvest of heroic deds.

That war was long anticipated by far-seeing men. Its occurrence was delayed by many timely compromises, but its final coming was enevitable.

It could be delayed, not prevented. The cape at the southern point of Africa was long marked upon the map as the "Cape of Storms." When it was at last circumnavigated it became the "Cape of Good Hope" instead, and it will always remain so.

Now that the struggle of 1861 to

1865 is over the country has come to look upon it as bringing new and better conditions, and the making of a homogeneous union of states.

A divided nation of 30,000,000 people in 1861 is now a united country of 90,000,000 souls. Buckner and Grant were cadets at West Point and were boyish friends. They again met in the heat of war at Donelson, but when Grant's life went out on Mount McGregor, Buckner, with tender hands and moist eyes, acted as pall-bearer for the Great Commander.

And each side honors itself in paying tribute to its former opponents. Defeat is the less bitter at the hands of a noble foe, and victory the sweeter when won over a brave enemy. And when united such opponents have nothing to fear from the rest of the world.

In a calm sea every man is a pilot. In the stormy times, of which we are speaking, the greatest skill was needed; but in the history of our country no great occasion has arisen in which the man of the hour did not appear. Pilots may steer but the winds, the tides and the currents move the ship.

In those weary days "Grief burned faster than tears could drown," but the end came at last, and now, after fifty years, it seems like a frightful

dream. Many of the old men of that day still hang on like oak leaves in the late winter, and a goodly number are now gathered in one of the most remarkable reunions of all time.

The magnitude of that contest is difficult of comprehension to the generation of today. The Greek children were taught to commit to memory the names of the three hundred heroes who fell at Thermopylae. But so great was the Civil war that the mere cost of compiling and printing its official record was \$3,000,000. Human memory could only contain its principal events.

When I visited the Wilderness Battle Ground a few years ago, I sought for some memento to carry home, and in one of the trees hung an empty hornets' nest, collected by nature's little warriors in time of peace, and it now hangs in my library as a suitable memorial of an empty battlefield. The Hornets' Nest Brigade is here today, but without their stings. Nature, the all-forgiving, takes the red battlefield in her arms and hides it with flowers and harvests.

In Shiloh Park is commemorated the first great battle of the war, where a large part of the troops on both sides had seen but little of drill and discipline, but where they, never-

theless, fought with heroic valor.

At Gettysburg may be seen in the fertile fields of an old and populous state the memorial of trained and tried troops coming on both sides from many a well-contested field.

Whilst at Vicksburg, the scene of a great siege bears in memory that companion victory in the west which, with Helena and Port Hudson, proclaimed that the waters of the mighty Mississippi should thenceforth flow unvexed to the sea.

And the great field of Chickamauga Mission Ridge and Lookout Mountain show an unequaled panorama where the contest furnished such a scenic spectacle as has probably never been equaled on the planet.

And, lastly, Appomattox marks the end of the struggle and the beginning of the new order of things. The world is a battlefield of accomplishment and endeavor, but the places where great issues have been fought out are worthy of special commemoration.

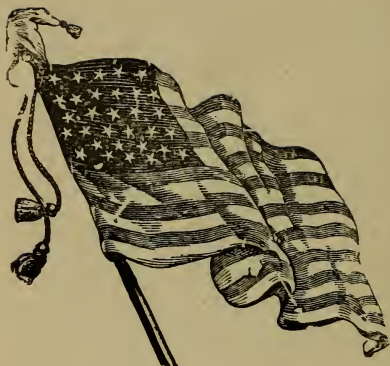
As we gather inspiration while standing by the graves of the world's heroic dead, so should we gather fresh encouragement by standing amid the scenes of the great battles of the past.

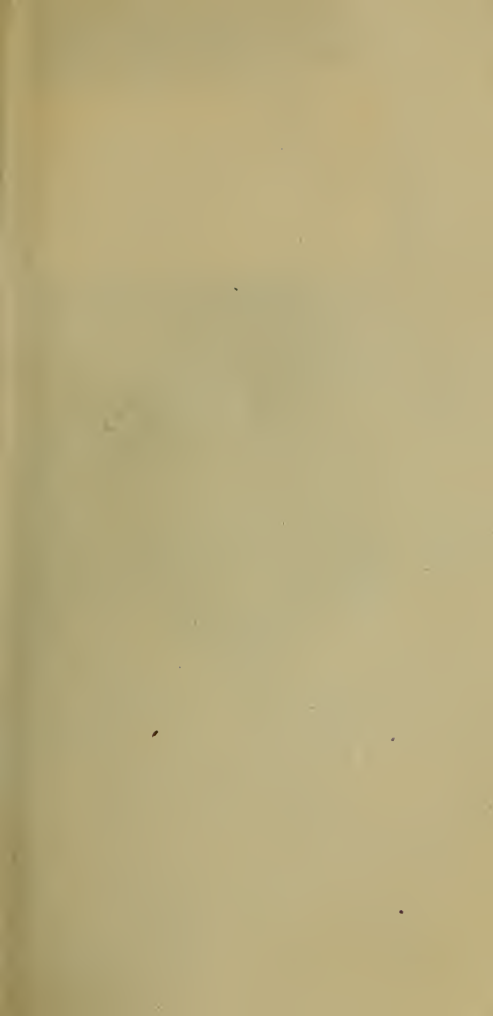
The importance of a battle is not measured by its bloodshed.

Only 192 Greeks fell at Marathon, and that victory was a turning point in the history of civilization that is felt even at this day. Only 19 graves are at Appomattox. The Union dead were taken to City Point, but one was overlooked and so it happens that on the Confederate Memorial day eighteen Confederates and one Union soldier bivouac upon that historic battlefield and are all alike covered with flowers by the tender hands of the Southern women.

Only one American soldier fell in Dewey's victory at Manila Bay, but his death marked another of the turning points in history.

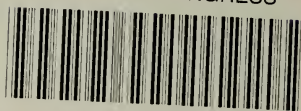
Comrades, on this historic field you did your duty well a half century ago. Undiscouraged by defeat the lesson was learned that a battle is not fought in one day; that a defeat may be turned into victory. We have learned now, too, that such a victory may in the end—under Benign Providence—become a victory for all who fought on that field. It is the flag of the united country that daily floats over this national battlefield park from sunrise to sunset, and with one accord we hope that it may float there forever.





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